

[Interview with Vito Cacciola #8]

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(original)

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Paper #8 INTERVIEWS WITH VITO CACCIOLA

by Merton R. Lovett

(from memory)

"De old lady, what just get her shoes, she liva on Chase Street. One time she mucha sick. She all alone. Her childrens grow old. No one lefta home to help de old woman.

"I don't know what sickness she hava. The docter he don't know no more. He calla every day. He looka wise. He giva mucha medicine, but the old woman geta no better.

"So I calla on her. I hava smile on de face. I speaka words of good cheer. I tella her pretty soon, she worka and walka and make holes in de shoes.

"She pulla sour face. She say, 'I am all ready for die. De young peoples no care for old woman. For de wake I hopa de puta on me my black dress. It's all menda and clean.'

"Hah, hah, I return, you folla dem all. You not so old. De good Lord, he known you hava de little grand children. He wanta their grandmama to helpa them with good words. Let us talka to Him.

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"Then I pray for her and she getta much brave.

"De nexta day I taka her some nica soup. She say, 'I no can eata. My mouth it is stoppa.'

"You thinka you no eat. Trya and see. This soup is mucha good. Eata and cheata de Devil.

"She eata de soup. She feela more courage. She says 'I wanta to see my son's baby, de little Congetta. Perhaps she's gotta new tooth. Her muder no knows how to cara de babies.'

"Sure, she geta well quick. Now I fixa her shoes mucha often. It's lika I tall you, Mr. Lovett, de good cheer and de good heart is mucha better than de doctor.

"Yes, I spenda much time in prayer. De good Lord keepa me strong and of good cheer. So I am happy and sing while I work and keepa music in de heart.

"Sure, sometimes I hava a cold but it don't lasta long.

"I don't needs de medicine. If I eata too much and have gas in de stomach, - you know what I do?

"I showa you. I usa some of dis. He comes from Sicily and is mada from lemons.

"Yes, it is a pretty box and de writing is in de Italian. Smella it.

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"You're right. It smella like de lemon. It's white lika snow. I taka de tablespoonfull in de glass of water. It tasta good and it what you call it fizz lika wine. Yes, effervescent.

"You trya some, Mr. Lovett. See, if you afraid, I drinka it first.

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"How you like it? Sure, it's good for what aila you. You calla it lemon citrate. Maybe? We maka it in de town where I live from de lemons.

"Yes, mosta everyone hava lemon trees. The lemon maka de business. De grow like de apple trees. Some of dem are on de plain, some on de side of de mountains, every wherever there is enough of water. In de drya weather de must hava mucha to drink. Round each lemon tree is a ditch, for what do you call it? Yes, irrigation.

"Do men and de boys picka de lemons. De women carry it, to de factory in baskets. De carry baskets so big on de top of the head.

"In de factory de besta lemons are picka out, de are bigga and beautiful.

"Some more womens fixa them nice in boxes. Then de are ship-ed to America.

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"De little lemons and de unperfect ones are treat-ed in de factory. From dem dey get de acid, yes, what you call it, lemon citrate. It is whita as flour and when it is dry de put it in barrels. De barrels is shipa all over de world."